



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Council Delegate Jonathan Hale encourages enrolled Navajos to apply for health coverage to avoid paying tax penalties under the Affordable Care Act

WINDOW ROCK – In accordance with the Affordable Care Act, beginning in 2014, individuals are required to have health coverage or pay a tax penalty, also known as the “individual shared responsibility payment,” unless they qualify for an exemption.

Enrolled members of the Navajo Nation may apply for an exemption from this requirement and are urged to apply prior to filing their 2014 taxes in 2015.

“The importance of the ACA is to recognize the strain on the economy of the health care industry and how that relates to personal health at home. Congress realized that it's a subsidy to allow people to live as they please but if they don't tend to their health, it's an inherited unhealthy lifestyle which eventually affects family, social factors, and appropriation factors in Congress and states,” stated Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels), who also chairs the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee.

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act in an effort to establish comprehensive health insurance improvements to help make health insurance coverage more affordable and accessible for millions of Americans.

For Native Americans and Alaska Natives, the law is intended to address inequities and increase access to quality, affordable health coverage, to invest in prevention and wellness, and to give Native American individuals and families more control over their care.

“The ACA is an opportunity to understand the health disparities we face as Navajo and how that affects our children. By learning this, we gain knowledge of good eating, healthy living and exercise. We must also understand how outside hospitals provide patient care and how we can emulate that with our 638 entities and request of them to provide that education and prevention through clinics. This is also for the 638 programs the Navajo Nation has under its responsibility to adjust to changes and capitalize on prevention,” said Delegate Hale.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website, the Affordable Care Act will provide 579,000 uninsured American Indians and Alaska Natives an opportunity to get affordable health insurance coverage.

The Tribal Exemption form can be accessed at the website below:

<http://marketplace.cms.gov/getofficialresources/publications-and-articles/tribal-exemption.pdf>

In-person assistance is available for those that need help with the application form. Please visit the following site to locate a local application assistant: <https://localhelp.healthcare.gov/>.

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